2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42



From Jheṭ to Bhador (i. e., from the middle of May to the middle of August) they do agricultural work. Then they plough from morning to noon, and later on they work making riceßeld-ridges and so on. First they sow millets and jungle corn, later janhẹ millet, maize, bajra, kọdẹ, raher, ghaṅgra, and sutri[1]. After this they sow paddy for transplanting. They hoe the maize (in this the women help them). They do the first ploughing for paddy-planting; thereupon they plough the second time, thereupon plough the third time; they also make ready the riceficld ridges; they make the fields muddy and harrow; then they pull the paddy seedlings out. (To plant the paddy is women's work.)

At this time they sow cotton and tilmiṅ oilseed[2] in the course of the month of Han (middle of July to middle of August). In Bhador (middle of August to middle of September) they plough the fields for họrgẹ́ and surguja[3] and sow these. They harvest the maize. In this work and in hoeing the cotton the women help them. They harvest the iṛi, gundli, kọdẹ, and orba millets[4]. In this work also the women assist them. The men thresh.

In the month of Dasãe (middle of September to middle of October) they plough the homestead field where the maize was, and sow mustard seed, and they harvest and thresh janhẹ millet and the early paddy. In Aghãṛ (middle of November to middle of December) they dig and plane the threshing-floor, and together with the women they harvest the paddy, cut the bajra and tilmiṅ, cut the raher, pluck the ghaṅgra and sutri, and pull out the họrgẹ́ and surguja. The women alone pull out the cotton. When the men have carted all this up to the threshing-floor, they spread it out on this, and joining cattle together they thresh. Having threshed out the seed they throw the straw away, having winnowed the grain they make a heap of it, and having twisted straw-ropes and straw-strings they put it into bundles. The other crops they beat out and put into bundles. Thereupon they cart all to their houses. In the month of Magh (middle of January to middle of February) they harvest the mustard and cut the thatching grass. Now the agricultural work is finished.

Besides all this work the men have all business with the money-lenders, and they pay the rent to the village headman. Men and women help each other to press oil in the oil-press. They do not make oil from the mustard and tilmiṅ; they sell this. They make oil from several kinds of fruit: kũiọḍi, bọru, kujri, bando, boṅga sarjọm, oraḍọm, lọppọṅ, kọrọṅj, nim, and others[5].

[1] Janhẹ is Panicum sanguinale, L.; bajra, Sorghum vulgare, Pers.; kọdẹ, Eleusine coracana, Gaertn.; raher, Cajanus indicus, Spreng.; ghaṅgra, Dolichos Catjang, Willd.; sutri, Phaseolus calcaratus, Roxb.

[2] Tilmiṅ, Sesamum indicum, DC.

[3] Họrgẹ́, Dolichos Biflorus, L. Surguja, Guizotia abyssinica, Cass.

[4] Iṛi, Panicum Crus-galli, L.; gundli, Panicum miliare, Lamarck; kọdẹ, Eleusine coracana, Gaertn.; orba, Setaria Italica, Kunth.

[5] Kũiọḍi, the fruit of the Mahua tree, Bassia latifolia, Roxb.; bọru, Schleichera trijuga, L.; kujri, Celastrus paniculatus, Willd.; bando, Spathodea Rheedyanthi, Benth.; boṅga sarjọm, Ventilago calyculata, Tulasne; oraḍọm, Ehretia aspera, L.; lọppọṅ, Terminalia belerica, Roxb.; kọrọṅj, Pongamia glabra, Vent.; nim, Melia Azadirachta, L.

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443
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3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42



bunch of "sal" flowers, there a village-group sitting at a feast of rice and rice-beer. We were also invited to examine some more wall-paintings, walls which were proud to bear representations of steam-engines and aero-planes, and marking our reluctance to be so near modernism, our Santal friends expressed profound surprise.

The yard is scrupulously clean, and, to translate a Bengali saying, "You might pick vermilion if some dropped upon it." There is sometimes the finish of a cement but generally everything is plastered over with mud and cow-dung. Jutting out into the lane are the pig-styes and poultry-yard. The room at the entrance is the "Gohal" (*cattle-shed*). Almost invariably a stench will repel one's olfactory nerves, but then one must not forget that the Santals like the Hindus almost worship the cows; and the first item in their annual Harvest Home is the "Gohal puja," when the cows are anointed with vermilion and adored as their best earthly possession. There, one will find the oil-press and the rice-husking "dheñki." In the houses of the more affluent, a separate outer house can be found which gives the combined service of a kitchen and poultry-yard. Drinking-water drawn from the neighbouring springs is stored in earthen pitchers, about two cubits and a half in height, and kept in a conspicuous place.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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Milk is not much utilized by the Santals, being mostly used for preparing curd and for churning butter. The churning is done by both men and women in the following way :- The earthen pot, in which curd is kept, is placed at the foot of a wooden post. They have a churning stick generally made of bamboo, which is three to four feet long and at the base of which are attached intersecting blades. This end of the stick is put inside the earthen pot. The upper end of the churning stick is kept in position by a cord running round the post and the stick. Another long cord is wrapped three or four times round the churning stick and by alternately pulling this cord from each end, the churning stick is made to swirl. After a while unsalted butter comes to the surface from which they prepare "Ghee". The [272] butter milk (the liquid remaining after extracting the unsalted butter) is drunk by the Santals. They consider it to be very nourishing.

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**Oil Press :-** The Santals use oil and spices in preparing curry. The oils which they generally use are—Mustard oil and oil from the fruits of the Mahua tree and from other various fruits and seeds. These oils they extract from the seeds and fruits by an oil-press. The oil press is made of two heavy logs of wood fixed on two vertically placed solid posts, at the two ends of the logs. The two logs where they face each other are planed. In the middle on the upper side of the lower log a shallow circular groove is cut and a small channel is made for the oil to come out through a lip, where some utensil is kept to collect the oil. To press the oil out, a rope is coiled round the logs at one end. In order to keep this down a wooden cleat is iserted

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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258 through the vertical post at the other end. Then they press together the two logs by placing another solid piece of wood crosswise over the upper log parallel to the wooden cleat which is fitted in the vertical post. With the help of these two, the logs are pressed together. Now-a-days the Santals supply the seeds and fruits to the Teli (oil men) and get oil in return. Besides using this oil for curry preparation they use oil in anointing, lubricating, for medicinal purposes and for lighting lamps.

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**How the Santals Prepare Parhaws (rice beer) :-** The Santals drink Handi in large quantities. Young boys and girls, old men and women all drink Handi. Their method of preparing (rice beer) handi is as follows :- The first thing is to make a pot, with a large mouth called *tukuc*. The *tukuc* is filled with dry leaves or straw and set on the fire, they do it outside the house in the open as there is much smoke. This is done in the morning when they are to start brewing. When the *tukuc* becomes cool, it is cleaned. Then in the afternoon, they take ordinary rice and roast this a little. The roasting is said to give a certain flavour to the beer. Thereupon the rice is boiled and after that spread out to dry. The quantity of rice used for one brew varies from four to six paos (one pao is quarter of a seer). When the rice is fairly dry it is mixed with some vegetable fermenting stuff called Bakhar.[1] Very often certain vegetable matter is added to the Bakhar to make the beer intoxicating. When the rice and

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1. Bakhar is a small round white thing which the Santals buy in the market. It is prepared by mixing hundred kinds of roots of trees and creepers with the powder of rice.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42



the food of the *Turuk*, rice or other food, the spirits will run away. If anyone has fever or if we want to exorcize a spirit, we try to give him curds made by a *Turuk* to eat. They say that in olden times one Mirza Turuk drove us from the country we were in. On a certain plain we made ready twelve carts and fled away across the open country. Mirza Turuk searched and could not find us. He thought: 'I must search for the tracks of twelve carts.' However, as we drove the twelve carts one behind the other, we made only one track, and so he never found us." The local Moslem population is very small[1] and confined to one or two villages of weavers and cultivators, who are themselves deeply affected by the Hindu environment. No doubt the story is very different in those districts of Northern Bengal where the Moslems predominate, but even there the great dissimilarity between Moslem and Santal culture probably militates against influences passing from the one to the other.

Christian influence, the result of a sustained and conscious effort on the part of missions, is considered later. Of deliberate efforts to Hinduize the religious practices and beliefs of the Santals the area is ignorant.

## NOTE TO CHAPTER 2

The relation of the aboriginal peoples to Hindu society has given rise to much controversy and discussion in India, not all of which is conducted in a spirit of scientific inquiry. An able presentation of many of the facts dealt with in this and the previous chapter, together with much else, and written from the Hindu standpoint, can be found in *The Aborigines—"So-called"—and Their Future*, by G. S. Ghurye, Ph.D. (Cantab.), published by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, 1943.

[1] The figures given for the local Moslem population in 1931 were as follows:

| | *Males* | *Females* |
|---|---|---|
| Ranibandh Thana .. .. .. | 138 | 190 |
| Raipore Thana .. .. .. | 358 | 378 |

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